



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

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For Immediate Release

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Park Authority Completes Colchester Acquisition

The Fairfax County Park Authority has recently acquired 20 parcels totaling over 135 acres in the Old Colchester area of Mason Neck. Owned by the McCue and McCue Limited Partnership, these were the largest parcels of undeveloped land remaining in private ownership in the Mount Vernon District. Three large parcels and a number of subdivided lots form a block of land within and east of the old chartered Town of Colchester.

The origins of the historic Town of Colchester lie in prehistoric times when the current path of Old Colchester Road was preceded by the Potomac Path. The Potomac Path was a major Indian trail that ran north/south along the fall line, taking advantage of fordable river crossings. The river shoreline of the Occoquan was rich in seasonal villages that took advantage of the lush estuarine environment. Arriving Europeans utilized the same pathway for overland travel. At the point where the Potomac Path crossed the Occoquan, Col. George Mason (great-grandfather of George Mason IV of Gunston Hall) established the first ferry in 1684. The trail was widened to a road by tobacco farmers around 1710, and became a portion of the great Kings Highway, the major road from Boston to Charleston. Fairfax County was created in 1742; settlement grew in the area and a growing population sought a town and port for tobacco. The Town of Colchester, chartered in 1753, was one of the first towns in Fairfax County. The property has the potential to provide important information about the history of one of the earliest towns in Fairfax County.

The property was acquired with bond funding for \$9.52 million. The Park Authority will go through a master planning process to define the future park development for the property, but with the significant natural and cultural resources, a resource-based park is envisioned. For information about land acquisition or park planning contact the Park Authority Public Information Office at 703-324-8662.

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